

Notes of the last year Pragmatics

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Conversational implicature (classroom notes)

Pragmatics

2nd Semester

→ **Conversational**

e.g. - Actually it prevents tooth decay.
- He is poor but he is honest. (To become [↑]bad or fall apart)
- Mary is taking cooking lessons as her husband bought her a wok.
- He is a Chinese, he therefore knows how to use chopsticks.
- John can read German. Moreover, he can write poems in the language.

→ **Conversational implicature**

Generally it arises from the conversational features attached to a particular lexical item or linguistic structure.

→ When we speak we produce actions/utterances to convey

- **Said** / **Entailed**
- **Implicated**

↓

Conventionally implied (natural meaning) Conversational

Generalized Particularized

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e.g. - Most of John's friends believe in ghosts
(generalized)

- A: Where is the IHT?

B: John's been around?

- A: Where is John?

B: The light is on his room?

- A: What time is it?

B: The milk man has passed.

(particularized)

Definition of key concepts:

- Assertion: What is asserted is one obvious or the surface meaning of the utterance.

- Presupposition: What is taken for granted in the utterance - e.g. I saw the Mona Lisa in the Louvre. This presupposes that the Mona Lisa is in the Louvre.

- Entailments: Is the logical or necessary consequence of the sentence/utterance - e.g.:

- I saw sth in the Louvre.

- " " " somewhere.

- sth was seen.

entailed: something that every body knows

- There is a Louvre (Museum)
- There is a Mona Lisa in the Louvre.
- **Inferences** are interpretations that other people draw from the utterance for which we can not always directly account for (explain)
e.g.: The Mona Lisa was recently in show (exhibition) in public.
- we might also inferers rationally that the speaker has been to France recently.

Meaning

Natural

- Inference
- Assertion
- Presupposition
- Entailments (obvious)
- static

Non-Natural

- Implicature (figuratives)
- Variable (change according to the context)

The theory of speech acts

The theory of speech acts, as developed by John Austin and John R. Searle, sets its place in the context of human action and inquires about the functions and purposes of human action that are accomplished by sentences.

I. Classification of Speech Acts

What is speech act theory? It describes and classifies the different kinds of things that people do when they use sentences in actual speech. According to John Searle's classification, there are 5 general categories:

1. **Assertives**: "commit the speaker ... to the truth of the expressed proposition"

e.g., "I went to town yesterday"

2. **Directives**: "are attempts ... to get the hearer to do sth" - e.g., "Go to town"

3. **Commissives**: "commit the speaker ... to some future course of action"

e.g., "I promise to go to town"

4. **Expressives**: express a "psychological state" about a situation - e.g., "I apologize"

5. **Declarations**: "bring about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality"

e.g., "I resign"

Pragmatic Ability

Pragmatic Ability

→ someone is taking "pragmatic approach" to sth the implication is that the person is being practical.

→ P.A = refers both to knowledge about pragmatics and the ability to use it.

→ P.A encompasses: The four main channels for communication, the receptive ones, listening & reading, and the productive ones, speaking & writing.

→ Whether these channels are pragmatically successful in L2 depends on various factors, such as:

1. Proficiency in the L2 or other related lgs
2. Age, gender, occupation, social status & experience in the relevant L2-speaking communities
3. previous experiences with pragmatically competent L2 speakers

→ Areas of the 4 skills:

1. As listeners:

- Interpret what is said

" " not said and what may be communicated non-verbally.

- The input could be through lge (words, phrases, discourse) through gestures or through silence

2. As readers:

- Comprehension of written messages
- Identifying the rhetorical structure of texts

3. As speakers:

- Knowing how to say what we want to say.
- " what not to say at all
- " to communicate non-verbally.
- " to do to our output to be comprehensible pragmatically

4. As writers:

- Knowing how to write our messages intelligibly.

Note: we have to pay attention to the level of politeness, directness, and formality as well as considering issues of rhetorical structure (with the 4 skills)

→ Pragmatics focused on the spoken medium & has paid little attention to writing

→ P.A = being able to go beyond the literal meaning of what is said or written in order to understand or interpret the intended meaning

Conversational Implicature

Conversational Implicatures

- Are pragmatic inferences
- arise from ~~contextual~~ contextual factors
- are observed in conversation

→ Grice's theory of C.I.:

- He proposed that participants in a communicative exchange are guided by principle, he called it "the Cooperative Principle" -

a principle that guides how conversation as it is required

- It is - principle that guide how to communicate. It is an umbrella term for 3 components that ~~guide~~ grouped together into 4 categories, called the "Maxims of Conversation"

1. The Maxims of Quality: (truthfulness)

- a. Do not say what you believe to be false
- b. " " " that for which you lack adequate evidence.

2. The Maxims of Quantity: (Informativeness)

- a. Make your contribution as informative as is required
- b. ~~do not~~ " " " more " " that " "

3. The Maxims of Relation: (relevance)

- Be relevant

4. The Maxims of Manner: (perspicuity)

- a - Avoid obscurity of expression.
- b - " ambiguity.
- c - Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
- d - Be orderly.

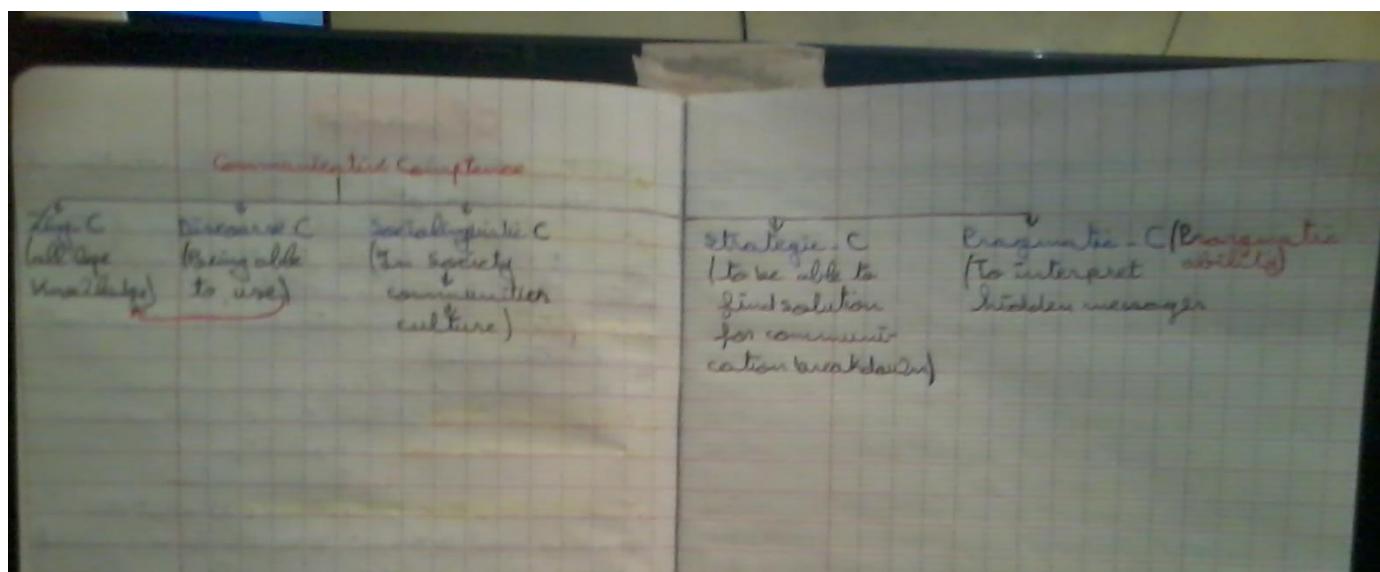
→ Grice's Theory of Conversational Implicatures (abridged) is abbreviated in ↑

→ regards to the cooperative principle the speaker may do:

- 1 - Observe the maxims → default assumption
- 2 - Opt out " " → called Hedge
- 3 - Flout a " →
- 4 - Violate a " e.g. lie.

• If the speaker do the last, he is ignoring the cooperative principle.

Communicative Competence



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Politeness

Politeness

concept, opinion, idea

- The basic notion of Brown and Levinson's (B&L) politeness theory is "face", which has been defined as "the public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself". In their framework, face consists of two related aspects: 1) negative face: wanting your actions not to be constrained by others; 2) positive face: the positive consistent self-image that people have and their desire to be appreciated and approved of at least by some other people. The action people take to preserve both kinds of face for themselves and the people they interact with contributes to politeness. In B&L's (1987, 1987) model, politeness has been defined as redressive action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effect of face-threatening acts (FTAs). By redressive action, they mean action that gives face to the addressee. (sendee, sender) ^{violate, break} FTAs as acts that infringe on the hearer's need to maintain his/her self-esteem. In this connection, they hold that certain kinds of acts

intrinsically threaten face, namely those that run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker. Therefore, they distinguish between acts that threaten negative face and those that threaten positive face. B & L enumerate acts such as orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminding, threats, warnings and dares as acts that threaten one's negative face. However, they incorporate acts such as expressions of ^{negative opinion} disapproval, ^{disrespect} criticism, contempt or ^{what} ~~stall~~ -out, complaints and reprimands, accusations, and insults as acts that threaten one's positive face. To this, politeness strategies are developed. B & L (1987) ^{for the main purpose of dealing with these} sum up human politeness F.A.s. behaviour in three strategies: negative politeness, positive politeness and off-record indirect strategy. Positive politeness is oriented towards the positive face of the hearer, or the positive self-image that he claims for him self. The positive politeness strategy should be that one recognizes that his/her hearer has a desire

to be respected. It also confirms that fact that the relationship is friendly. Nevertheless, the negative politeness strategy is oriented towards partially satisfying the hearer's negative face. That is to say, it consists in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee's negative-face wants and will not interfere with his/her freedom of action. Some examples are: "I don't want to bother you but..." or "I was wondering if..." (Talib, 2002: 14)

Off-record indirect strategies are not directly addressed to others. They also might be referred to as hints. In this relation, B & L cite the following example: "Damn, I'm out of cash, I forgot to go to the bank today." In this example, the person may be intending to get the hearer to lend him/her cash. By the same token, Talib (2002: 15) enumerates three off-record strategies: 1) Give hints: "It's a bit cold here"; 2) Be vague: "Perhaps someone should have been more responsible"; 3) Be sarcastic or joking: "Yeah, he's a real Einstein".

Assuming that each conversation participant has a knowledge of some sort of the intrinsic FTAs, s/he is expected to be able to evaluate the situation and use the most appropriate politeness strategies in the situation at hand. To this end, the speaker needs to take three sociological variables into consideration:

- 1) The sociological distance between speakers and hearers;
- 2) The "relative power" between speaker and hearer;
- 3) The "absolute ranking of impositions" in the particular culture.

Glossary

Glossary

- **Syntax**: The study of the formal relation of one sign with another.
- **Semantics**: deals with the relation of signs to what they denote (the objects in the world which they refer to / describe).
- **Competence**: ~~(it refers to that abstract set)~~
of capacities which
The knowledge of rules of grammar.
- **Performance**: It how those rules are used.
- **Communication** → Production
→ Interpretation
- **Communicative Competence**: is what the speakers need to know to be able to communicate appropriately in a lge community.
- **Pragmatic ability**: It is being able to go beyond the literal meaning of what is said or written in order to interpret the intended meanings, assumptions, purposes, goals and the kind of actions that are being performed.
- **Communication breakdown** between:
Native ↔ Native and Native ↔ Non-Native
is less severe is
less severe cultural shock

